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STATUS OF PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Supplemental Food Programs Division
Food and Nutrition Service, USDA

July 1987

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WIC RESEARCH

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1. WIC Analytic Research Projects

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

The general objective of the study is to conduct analyses using extant data bases that may be useful in improving policy and/or program operations. The study is intended to expand present knowledge about program and participant characteristics and the effectiveness of the WIC Program.

In addition to adhoc yet-to-be-determined analysis, study analyses will include:

- o The relation of nutritional risk and other characteristics of WIC participants
- o WIC program factors associated with improved health and pregnancy outcomes
- o Factors affecting WIC food package costs
- o WIC program factors associated with providing benefits to those most in need
- o Factors affecting dietary intake of WIC participants
- o Characteristics of WIC households
- o Patterns of WIC participation
- o Food consumption patterns among WIC participant categories

STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH:

This contract will provide specified and adhoc policy-relevant analyses using existing data bases including the Bureau of the Census' Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), the National WIC Evaluation, and the WIC Participant and Program Characteristics Study.

CURRENT STATUS:

The contractors have completed familiarization with the data bases and are proceeding with work on the projects.

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE: March 1990

STUDY CONTACTS:

FNS Office of Analysis and Evaluation
Leighton Ku,
Carol Kelly, (703) 756-3133

Supplemental Food Programs Division
Lynn Jordan, (703) 756-3730

PRINCIPLE CONTRACTOR: Abt Associates
SUBCONTRACTOR: Research Triangle Institute

2. WIC Benefit Targeting Study

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

- o Identify good current practices (high proportions of pregnant women participating or high positive changes over last year) using management information at the Federal, State, and local levels.
- o Examine and identify the range of methods that State and local WIC agencies have developed in actual practice that have proven effective in accomplishing these objectives, and also the successful methods for reaching and recruiting pregnant women that are used in related DHHS and other health care delivery programs targeted to low income persons.
- o Select a number of these "best practices" that appear feasible for widespread transfer and implementation by State and local WIC agencies.
- o Conduct demonstration, testing and evaluation of the transferability of such practices, including their feasibility, effectiveness and efficiency (cost effectiveness) in a number of types of local WIC project settings.
- o Develop extensive materials on the tested and proven methods identified and developed in the course of the study and implement training procedures for widespread dissemination to WIC State agencies.

STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH:

- o This three-year study will have three components. The first phase will attempt to identify effective recruitment strategies and specify the conditions under which high priority targeting is achieved.
- o The second study phase will involve implementation of optimal strategies at selected sites and assessment of treatment impacts.
- o The final study phase will refine the strategies identified and prepare all necessary materials for State, local, and nationwide dissemination.

CURRENT STATUS:

Field work for Phase I will be conducted through September 1987. Site visits will take place in: Arizona, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Tennessee, Texas and Washington.

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE: Summer 1989.

STUDY CONTACTS:

FNS Office of Analysis and Evaluation
Gary Bickel, (703) 756-3115

Supplemental Food Programs Division
Lynn Jordan, (703) 756-3730

CONTRACTOR: Cosmos Corporation

3. WIC Breastfeeding Promotion Study and Demonstration

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

- o Identify effective breastfeeding promotion models currently used in the WIC Program.
- o Adapt models and field test for acceptability with a wide range of program participants.
- o Develop guidance and breastfeeding promotion models for use as technical assistance to State agencies.

The deliverables will include:

- o A report of the effective methods of delivering WIC nutrition education (i.e., group instruction, individual counseling).
- o A series of field-tested breastfeeding educational plans and materials for WIC participants which will address issues affecting the incidence and duration of breastfeeding in women.
- o Technical assistance (e.g., guidance manual) for State agencies on recommended methods and materials for effective nutrition education on breastfeeding.

STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH:

Contract with health education research group to: (a) identify effective methods and available materials; (b) field-test the materials by systematically gathering target audience reactions to the materials; and (c) monitor changes in behavior related to breastfeeding. The project has four phases:

- o Phase I: Design the study and collect mail survey, interview and observation data.
- o Phase II: Conduct analyses and develop a compendium which describes effective breastfeeding and promotion models used in the WIC Program.
- o Phase III: Provide a final summary report and training for State agencies at the 1988 meeting of the National Association of WIC Directors.
- o Phase IV: Adapt, enhance and systematically field test existing models with a wide range of WIC participants. (This phase is optional.)

CURRENT STATUS:

Mail Survey: All WIC State agencies were asked to participate in a mail survey and to nominate up to two local agencies that utilize effective models to promote breastfeeding. A mail survey of the nominated WIC local agencies was mailed in June 1987.

Telephone Follow-up: This will be made with the 20 local agencies that evidence the most effective models. Selection of these 20 agencies took place in early July.

Case Studies: From the 20 models, eight will be selected for case study analysis (6 WIC sites and 2 non-WIC sites). The case studies are to commence in August 1987 and run for approximately 6 weeks.

Final Report: The final study report is due in February 1988. A decision on whether to field test existing models with a wide range of WIC participants is to be made in March 1988.

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE: February 1990.

STUDY CONTACTS:

FNS Nutrition and Technical Services Division
Brenda Lisi, (703) 756-3554

Supplemental Food Programs Division
Doris Dvorscak, (703) 756-3730

Office of Analysis and Evaluation
Jerry Burns, (703) 756-3115

CONTRACTOR: Development Associates

4. WIC Child Impact Study

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

The National WIC Evaluation contained a study of a nationally representative sample of existing children of pregnant women participating in WIC and non-WIC control samples. This cross-sectional study assessed at one point in time the health and developmental status of children with different histories of WIC participation.

Since the longer-term effects of the WIC Program cannot be examined through a follow-up of the original study group, USDA is examining the feasibility of an entirely new evaluation. The purpose of this feasibility study is to solicit proposed designs.

STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH:

Cooperative agreements for research design and development will be awarded. The number and monetary value of the awards will be determined by technical and cost factors.

CURRENT STATUS:

An announcement was published in July 1987 in the Commerce Business Daily and letters will be sent to qualified individuals and organizations with previous research experience or scholarly interest in the area. The expected date for awarding the agreements is January 1988. Final research design proposals are expected to be presented in July 1988. If judged feasible, one or more of the research designs will then be recommended for future funding.

STUDY CONTACTS:

FNS Office of Analysis and Evaluation
John Endahl, (703) 756-3115

Supplemental Food Programs Division
Lynn Jordan, (703) 756-3730

5. WIC Eligibility Population Study

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

- o Detailed, comprehensive baseline estimates (1979/80) of WIC population categories by race, age and poverty income status at national, State and county levels for those eligible for WIC under income criterion only, and those eligible under income and nutritional risk criteria combined.
- o National estimates of 1984/85 eligible population size, by WIC category, and an updating method for producing annual current estimates.
- o Baseline period census data on infants, and mothers of infants and children, by age and poverty income status, and for SMSAs, Indian reservations and Tribal Trust Areas, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH:

- o The baseline numbers of potential or income-eligible persons by WIC category at each geographic level were derived from a special extract file from the 1980 census, prepared for FNS by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.
- o State-level vital statistics data were used in estimating the number of pregnant women from the census extract data; the incidence of breastfeeding in the 6-12 month postpartum period was estimated from DHHS National Natality Survey data (1980).
- o A listing was made of the detailed medical and dietary nutritional risk criteria used in WIC eligibility determinations, as set forth in the WIC State agency 1984 plan of operation for each State, District of Columbia and selected Indian agency areas.
- o The "modal set" of nutritional risk criteria was determined from these to represent the most prevalent or representative current operational definition of eligibility for the WIC Program nationwide.
- o The probability, or frequency, of being "at risk" under any one or more of the nutritional risk criteria in the "modal set" was estimated for each WIC population group, first for medical criteria only, then for medical and dietary criteria combined. National sample survey data from NHANES-II (1976-80) and the National Natality and Neonatal Mortality Surveys (1980) were used.
- o The estimated baseline number of fully eligible persons in each WIC category was determined for each State and county (under the "modal set" of risk criteria consistently applied across all areas) by applying the nutritional risk frequency estimates, differentiated by age, race and poverty income categories, to the actual population characteristics of each specific area from the Census data.
- o The 1984/85 level of eligibility nationally was determined by applying the estimated annual change in numbers of eligibles over the period (1979/80 to 1984/85) to the estimated size of each WIC eligible population group. The annual rate of change was estimated from the Current Population Survey and March Income Supplement for each year, and from published national birth-rate data.

CURRENT STATUS:

The Final Report is in USDA clearance.

Volume I - Data, Methods and Findings

Volume II - Nutritional Risk Criteria Used to Define Eligibility
in the WIC Program

Volume III - Data Tables by State and County (including selected data for
Indian Agency areas)

STUDY CONTACTS:

FNS Program Evaluation Staff
Gary Bickel, (703) 756-3106

Supplemental Food Programs Division
Clara French, (703) 756-3730

CONTRACTOR: Sigma One Corporation

6. WIC Income Verification Study

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

- o Determine the incidence and magnitude of income misreporting in WIC certification.
- o Identify methods and procedures which can reduce the incidence of income misreporting.
- o Determine the cost-effectiveness and administrative feasibility of model procedures (e.g., forms) to reduce income misreporting.

STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH:

- o This study has three phases and lasts approximately 24 months. The first phase involves a review of ongoing quality assurance procedures. Income-oriented interviews were conducted with WIC participants in five States (Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, North Carolina and Texas). This first phase is intended to yield model quality assurance procedures for onsite testing in the second study year.
- o The second phase of the study is designed to implement model quality assurance procedures in several local WIC sites. The second phase will also determine the cost-effectiveness and administrative feasibility of selected error-reducing models in light of caseloads, staffing levels and funding resources.
- o In phase III, prototype certification forms, guidance materials and other improvements to the current self-certification process will be developed and disseminated to State agencies.

CURRENT STATUS:

Site visit report from Phase I has been received and analysis plan and design options are now being recommended for Phase II.

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE: September 1988.

STUDY CONTACTS:

FNS Office of Analysis and Evaluation
Steve Gale, (703) 756-3117
Alice-Lynn Ryssman

Supplemental Food Program Division
Geraldine Broadway, (703) 756-3730

CONTRACTOR: Quality Planning Corporation

SUBCONTRACTOR: Westat Corporation

7. 1988 National Maternal and Infant Health Survey (NMIHS)

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

FNS is one of several Federal agencies participating in a health data collection effort by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). The major areas of investigation include low birthweight births and infant mortality, barriers and facilitators to prenatal care, the effects of substance use on pregnancy outcome, the effects of sexually transmitted diseases (including AIDS) on pregnancy outcome, and use and evaluation of public programs such as WIC and Medicaid, by mothers and infants.

The inclusion of WIC questions in the survey is expected to provide data on WIC services and outcomes in the context of other health care.

STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH:

The survey will consist of three components:

- a natality survey, which will be sampled from approximately 13,000 certificates of live birth
- a fetal mortality survey, which will be sampled from approximately 5,560 reports of fetal death
- an infant mortality survey, which will be sampled from approximately 8,000 infant death certificates

Three fold oversampling of Blacks is proposed for the mortality components of the survey. Low birthweight infants in the live births component is also proposed to be oversampled.

Questionnaires will be mailed to approximately 26,360 mothers, approximately 23,000 hospitals, and approximately 24,000 prenatal care providers associated with these events. NCHS's ability to conduct the intended scope of the NMIHS is contingent upon securing funds from co-sponsors.

CURRENT STATUS:

In summer, 1987, a four-state pretest will begin for 200 live births, 200 fetal deaths, and 200 infant deaths. The participating States are expected to be Arkansas, Michigan, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. FNS will evaluate the pretest results and recommend revisions for the main survey.

STUDY CONTACTS:

FNS Office of Analysis and Evaluation
Gary Bickel, (703) 756-3115

Supplemental Food Programs Division
Lynn Jordan, (703) 756-3730

NCHS Paul Placek,
Ken Keppel, (301) 436-8954

8. Study of WIC Participant and Program Characteristics

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

Public Law 99-500, enacted in 1986, requires FNS to submit a biennial report on WIC participant and program characteristics to Congress. To satisfy this requirement, FNS is seeking to develop and implement a system of gathering, analyzing and publishing WIC Program information.

The information sought includes periodic descriptions of the characteristics of State and local agencies which operate the Program and periodic descriptions of the characteristics of individuals and families participating in the program.

This study incorporates two efforts: (1) produce the 1988 report and (2) produce the 1990 report. The development of these reports will serve as the stepping stones to institutionalization of routine biennial reporting.

STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH:

The study will establish the institutional systems by which FNS and State and local WIC agencies will routinely generate the required biennial report. For reports to be submitted in 1988 and 1990, the contractor will, in cooperation with FNS, define data elements needed, design the sampling strategies, develop and obtain clearance for the various data collection forms and training materials, train the State agencies, develop and document analysis files, analyze the data collected, synthesize these data into reports suitable for delivery to Congress and deliver printed copies of the reports.

In addition, this study will develop procedures by which FNS will routinely generate the required biennial report after 1990. The contractor will develop protocols for biennial routine reporting of the data to FNS and routine analysis of the data by FNS. To facilitate ad hoc analysis of the data, this study will also create a Statistical Analysis System (SAS) data base corresponding to each of the biennial reports.

The 1988 study follows a process typical of contracted representative surveys except:

- Local WIC agency staff will do the data collection through interviews and record extract; and
- State agency staff will train the local data collectors.

CURRENT STATUS:

The contract was awarded in July 1987.

STUDY CONTACTS:

FNS Office of Analysis and Evaluation
Jill Randell, (703) 756-3133
Jay Hirschman

Supplemental Food Programs Division
Olivia Gunter, (703) 756-3710

CONTRACTOR: Research Triangle Institute

9. Modification and Enhancement of the Computerized Food Package Modeling System (CFPMS)

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

CFPMS is a management system designed to allow users to evaluate the impact of changes on the nutritional content and cost of food packages for three of FNS' food assistance programs. It will also be used to answer several research questions regarding the formulation of new or tailored food packages. The study will:

- o Specify costs (ranges and averages) for the sum of all projected WIC food packages, individual food packages, food groups per package, and food items per food group.
- o Estimate selected nutrient content of a specified food package or food item by unit size per month or per day.
- o Calculate the percentage of the total food package contribution of specific nutrients per food group (or per food item).
- o Calculate the proportion to total kilocalories contributed by protein, fat, carbohydrate and refined sugar per food package (or per food group, or per food item).
- o Allow comparison of the food package nutrient profile against nutrient standards (RDA's and USRDA's) for identified sex/age groups per food package (or per food group, or per food item).

STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH:

- o The project will develop a computerized system initially for use by FNS headquarters staff and regional office staff on a pilot basis.
- o The system software, including tutorial and users' manuals, features a user-friendly interactive format that permits access and analyses of its data base.
- o The computer system is executed by one main "driver" program using TSO CLIST commands to allow user selection of subsystem options. Program modules are written in COBOL.

CURRENT STATUS:

The final computerized system is nearly operational. Some refinements to the software must be completed. The user and maintenance manuals are planned for revision, in addition to routine data base maintenance. Access to the system will initially be available only to headquarters and regional office staff. The project to make modifications and enhancements to the partially completed interactive computer software system is expected to be awarded in Fiscal Year 1988.

STUDY CONTACTS:

FNS Nutrition and Technical Services Division
 Nancy Gaston, (703) 756-3554

Office of Analysis and Evaluation
 Steve Gale, (703) 756-3115

10. CDC-FNS Cooperative Project on Smoking Cessation During Pregnancy

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

- o Develop, field test and evaluate a package of smoking interventions for use with WIC participants which is compatible with both prenatal clinic and WIC program settings.
- o Develop a practitioner's guide for adapting and implementing prenatal smoking cessation efforts for WIC participants in non-study sites.

STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH:

- o A cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) extends its Smoking Cessation During Pregnancy Project to include coverage of WIC sites. This pilot project will last approximately 2-1/2 years and will involve three study States: Colorado, Maryland and Missouri. Only Colorado and Missouri will conduct their studies at WIC sites. CDC will provide all scientific and technical support needed for management of this project.
- o CDC, working in cooperation with the States and in consultation with FNS, will:
 - select a smoking cessation package of interventions that is compatible with both WIC Program and prenatal clinic use;
 - develop a research design for testing the effectiveness of the package of interventions;
 - develop a practitioner's guide;
 - develop recommendations on how to adapt the package of interventions for use with private physician patients participating in the WIC Program; and
 - assess the extent to which the package of interventions can be adapted to non-study States. This assessment will include critiques of the package from at least three non-study States.
- o CDC will work cooperatively with FNS to disseminate information about this project, including making CDC's project staff available for presentations at meetings such as the annual National Association of WIC Director's meeting.

CURRENT STATUS:

- o The intervention materials are still in the developmental stages and need field and pretesting. CDC is presently soliciting public and potential participant comments on the project materials. Some of the materials have been reviewed at FNS headquarters for readability, general content, length, etc. The comments will be compiled and used by CDC in the final design of the package of interventions to be used in the three study States. The States are running these studies and can determine the degree of burden they are willing to accept.

- o Data collection will begin in Colorado and Missouri in December 1987 and in Maryland in January or February 1988. The estimated completion date depends on the States' obtaining an adequate sample size to make valid statistical analysis possible. The sampling size is dependent on the initial participant enrollment in the study and the attrition rate during the intervention/data collection phase.
- o CDC is planning to expand the intervention portion to 24 States in Fiscal Year 1989. Data collected will include the number of participants and the ceased and reduced smoking rates.

STUDY CONTACTS:

FNS Office of Analysis and Evaluation
Jay Hirschman, (703) 756-3133

Supplemental Food Programs Division
Donna Carrick, (703) 756-3730

CDC Division of Reproductive Health, Pregnancy Epidemiology Branch
Michael Dalmat, (404) 329-1319

11. Wayne County, Michigan Health Clinic Smoking Reduction Project

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

- o A demonstration/evaluation of two specific smoking reduction methods in a high risk population of pregnant women in Wayne County, Michigan, which has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the nation. Women participating in WIC and non-WIC participants will be included in the study.

STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH

- o This three year, quasi-experimental study will compare two methods adapted from the American Cancer Society's "Fresh Start" and the American Lung Association's "Cigarette Send Off" to a control population. Outcome variables will include: smoking rates at delivery and 12 months after treatment, birthweight, and nonparticipation.

CURRENT STATUS:

- o Cooperative agreement between FNS and Wayne County Department of Health was signed in June 1986. The intervention and methodology are currently being designed. Delays have been experienced due to staffing problems.

CONTACTS:

FNS Office of Analysis and Evaluation
Carol Kelly, (703) 756-3133

Supplemental Food Programs Division
Donna Carrick, (703) 756-3730

12. WIC Administrative Funds Management Study

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

- o Develop a detailed body of knowledge on:
 - The components of WIC administrative costs.
 - The factors that influence the level and composition of WIC administrative costs and the quality of program services.
 - How WIC managers have successfully controlled costs while maintaining quality.
- o Develop a body of guidance material that WIC managers can use to control costs while maintaining quality.

STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH:

- o The overall study will last about 2-1/2 years and will be completed in three phases.
- o In Phase I, the contractor conducted telephone interviews with about 200 WIC stakeholders including all State agencies and the large Indian State agencies, 100 local agencies, FNS regional offices, and about 25 other persons. Their views on WIC Program management and service quality are being tabulated for later reference.
- o In Phase II, 32 local agencies in 8 States were recruited to take part in initial Administrative Cost Assessments and Feasibility Studies (California, Georgia, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Washington). These sites were selected based on reported operating data, results of previous research and referrals by State WIC directors. Site visits were conducted to describe administrative costs in these agencies and the feasibility of performing complete case studies.
- o In Phase III the results of the initial assessments and feasibility studies were used to select and work with 16 local agencies to conduct intensive case studies of administrative cost and the quality of program services. Research techniques used included interviews with staff and managers, observations of work, review of records, etc.

CURRENT STATUS:

Reports on Phases I and II of the study are nearing completion. The field work for Phase III has been completed, and the results are currently being analyzed.

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE: January 1988.

STUDY CONTACTS:

FNS Office of Analysis and Evaluation
Julie Kresge, (703) 756-3133

Supplemental Food Programs Division
Chris Lipsey, (703) 756-3710

CONTRACTOR: Abt Associates, Inc.

13. Patient Flow Analysis

MAJOR OBJECTIVES:

The Supplemental Food Programs Division has developed an initiative to train and assist WIC State agencies in implementing the Centers for Disease Control's Patient Flow Analysis (PFA) process to evaluate and improve WIC clinic operations. PFA documents personnel utilization in individual clinic sessions using data tables and flow charts produced on microcomputers.

STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH:

In order to determine the level of interest in PFA, a survey form for State agencies was sent to the regions on May 6, 1987 with responses due in June. Currently, various PFA training sources are being investigated. Based on the responses to the survey, SFPD will pursue training and assistance in utilizing the PFA system for all interested State agencies.

STUDY CONTACT:

FNS Supplemental Food Programs Division
 Olivia Gunter, (703) 756-3710

14. WIC Local Agency Training Center

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

- o Promote efficient and effective WIC clinic operations.
- o Facilitate intra-state uniformity of procedure and practices in WIC clinics.
- o Develop a videotape introducing State agencies to the concept of a working WIC clinic that functions primarily as a training center for clinic and local agency staff.
- o Develop written guidance providing greater detail regarding methods for determining the feasibility of a training clinic and establishing and operating such a clinic.
- o Transfer technical assistance from staff in a State which already operates a training clinic to other State agencies seriously considering establishment of their own training clinics.

SCOPE AND APPROACH:

- o The Washington State Agency has established and operated with considerable success a working WIC clinic which serves primarily as a training center for new local agency and clinic staff within the State. The clinic is also expanding the scope of training to include "refresher" courses for current staff.
- o The Agency will contract directly with the State agency to develop a training package which consists of a written procedures manual, a videotape and direct technical assistance. The purpose of this training is to introduce other State agencies to the concept of a training center and to assist participants in developing an action plan for establishing and operating a center. States will have received the manual prior to training. The manual will be divided into three sections -- the feasibility of a center, how to establish a center and how to operate a center. Once a State has determined an interest in further exploring the feasibility of a center, it will be able to attend the training session held in conjunction with FNS regional State Directors' meetings.
- o Guidance will address such topics as site selection, clinic arrangements to promote efficient patient flow, basic training curriculum, and techniques for integrating training and actual clinic operations.

CURRENT STATUS:

- o FNS is in the process of formalizing contractual arrangements with the State agency.
- o The State agency has drafted a script for the videotape.

CONTRACT CONTACTS:

FNS Office of the Deputy Administrator for Special Nutrition Programs
Vicky Urcuyo, (703) 756-3054

Supplemental Food Programs Division
Clara French, (703) 756-3730

Washington State Agency:
Loren Bell, (206) 753-3997

15. STATE AGENCY MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS (SAMIS)

MAJOR OBJECTIVES, DELIVERABLES, SCOPE, AND STATUS (BY STATE):

The purpose of this project was to offer technical support to WIC State agencies through an interagency agreement with the General Services Administration (GSA).

The primary focus of this technical support was to effect enhancement to existing management information systems, or provide a new or innovative approach to caseload management, vendor monitoring, or administrative costs management. Consideration was given to the transferability of the technology to other State agencies. Also, consideration was given to providing technical support for conducting feasibility studies to determine more exact needs and the most cost effective way to modify the system to meet those needs.

Outlined below are abstracts on the SAMIS projects and status reports as of June 1987.

CONNECTICUT

Objective: The objective of this project is to develop a comprehensive needs assessment of the Connecticut WIC Program management information system and to present the results of the study in an ADP Requirements Analysis and System Design Plan. The plan is to specify alternatives for implementing a new or innovative approach to caseload management, vendor monitoring, nutritional assessment, documentation of nutrition education, administrative cost management of the WIC program, linkage with other health services databases, WIC projection models, and automated certification.

Status: The first deliverable was presented in May 1987.

FLORIDA

Objective: The proposed project consists of a feasibility study to determine what benefits may be derived by the WIC Program from the implementation of ADP related administrative efficiencies at the clinic level.

The first phase of this project consists of planning, conducting, and documenting a feasibility study and cost benefit analysis of alternative approaches to on-line processing or program functions at the clinic level as a distributive processing subsystem within the broader structure of a statewide WIC ADP batch processing system. Some of the functions that might be considered for local processing are: on-line update of participant masterfile information, with edits to prevent data entry of inappropriate data; inquiry capability; printing certification documents, verification of certification/identification cards, clinic notices, and food instruments; coordinating and scheduling of appointments with those for related health services; coordinating information about specific clients with related health services; and generating management reports. At the end of the feasibility study it may be determined to proceed to a second phase which would include software design and a pilot project.

Status: Florida has submitted a preliminary Statement of Work (SOW). It is expected to have a revised version in June 1987. When the SOW is complete, the regional office will send it to GSA.

TENNESSEE

Objective: The purpose of the project is to develop and implement a regional health department microcomputer network with linkage to a nutrition services central office microcomputer as well as linkage to the State's central site mainframe computer operating within the Department of Finance and Administration's Information Services Division.

Status: The State agency is in the process of receiving internal approval of the SOW. GSA is preparing a Government cost estimate. The SOW should be released to the contractor in June/July, 1987.

ARIZONA

Objective: This project will provide Arizona's Community Nutrition Programs Section (CNPS) with: (1) an automated system which will convert the current process from batch processing to source document automation; (2) technical assistance so CNPS can develop a policy statement regarding hardware and software selections; (3) a high-risk vendor identification system; and (4) project follow-up support.

Status: The SOW was released to the contractor. The contractor is in the process of preparing the technical and cost proposals.

MONTANA

Objective: The objective of this project is to address the enhancement of the "Occurrence of Nutritional Problems" portion of the Montana certification system. Technical assistance is required to sort the nutritional problems, data collected, provide statistical analysis, and cross-match with the State's Department of Health and Environmental Science's vital statistics. The project will include the design, implementation and operational phases of software enhancement.

Status: The SOW has been released to the contractor. A proposal is expected in June 1987.

LOUISIANA

Objective: The purpose of this project was to provide an analysis of the State agency's needs for improving its current management information system. The project includes the following components: 1) recommendations for methods to capture enrollment data, 2) recommendations for upgrading the batch-mode system to a comprehensive, on-line system, and 3) hardware and software requirements.

Status: The project has been completed. The regional office has received and accepted the final deliverable from the GSA contractor. The State agency is planning to continue the project and will use its own administrative funds to hire a contractor who will design and test a comprehensive on-line system.

NEW MEXICO

Objective: The purpose of this project was similar to Louisiana's project, to provide an analysis of the State agency's needs for improving its current management information system. As with Louisiana, New Mexico sought recommendations for methods of upgrading its fragmented, batch-mode system to a comprehensive system which would allow the State to capture enrollment data. Hardware and software requirements were to be included.

Status: The project is nearing completion. The regional office has received the final deliverable. The State agency was to meet with its ADF staff to discuss the final report prior to indicating its acceptability.

CONTACTS:

FNS Supplemental Food Programs Division
Maeve Myers (703) 756-3710

16. Transfer of Automated System Technology

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

The purpose of this contract is to train regional office systems technicians on Turbo Pascal and Small State Agency Model (Small SAM) application to facilitate transfer of the Small SAM system to other WIC State agencies and to ensure its future support. In addition, this contract will secure consultant services and user upgrades.

Small SAM is a model automated management information system for small WIC State agencies (monthly participation under 10,000 Statewide). The model is designed to operate on inexpensive microcomputers and includes self-teaching operation manuals. The model accomplishes several objectives:

1. It promotes accountability over program expenditures by creating a sound accounting system and through computerization, a quick means to maintain, review and report program data.
2. The model offers some standardization of management systems. By having one standard system design, Regional Offices can provide faster and better assistance.
3. The model emphasizes simplicity and ease of use.
4. The model system conserves administrative funds by (a) reducing staff time needed for manual accounting systems, (b) improving accuracy so less staff time is spent locating errors, and (c) consolidating information needed for decisions on caseload management and vendor monitoring.

CURRENT STATUS:

The RFP was released in May 1987.

EXPECTED CONTRACT: July 1987

STUDY CONTACTS:

FNS Supplemental Food Programs Division
 Laurie Hickerson, (703) 756-3710
 Jackie Williams

CONTRACTOR: Wilson Hill Associates

17. WIC Vendor Identification Project (VIP)

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

- o Identify cost-effective technologies for capture of the vendor identification number affixed to WIC food instruments by authorized vendors in non-vendor specific retail distribution systems.
- o Develop specifications for a device needed to apply the cost-effective technologies identified for capture of the WIC vendor identification number.

STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH:

- o This eight-month study, which began August 1986, was completed by a contractor experienced in ADP related studies and banking procedures.
- o Part I involved familiarization of the contractor with the WIC program and specific needs and limitations related to food instrument processing. Five State agencies were visited (Florida, Iowa, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Wisconsin).
- o Part II encompassed the study of available technologies and the requirements for machine readable documents and equipment. This part also included development of specifications for devices incorporating the most appropriate technologies in a manner appropriate for WIC.
- o Part III was an analysis of cost-benefit to four State agencies if they would implement the technologies/devices specified in Part II.

CURRENT STATUS

The contract was completed in April 1987. As identified in the final report, the most effective systems for capturing the vendor identification number were, the current handstamp system and Magnetic Ink Character Recognition (MICR). The final deliverable provides State agencies with a calculation outline to determine if the MICR encoder would be a cost effective WIC expenditure in their State.

STUDY CONTACTS:

FNS Supplemental Food Programs Division
Maeve Myers, (703) 756-3710

Office of Analysis and Evaluation
Jay Hirschman, (703) 756-3133

CONTRACTOR: American Management Systems, Inc. (AMS)

18. WIC Vendor Management Meeting

The purpose of this procurement is to secure a contractor to arrange a meeting in October 1987 of WIC vendor managers from State agencies, and FNS regions and headquarters to discuss and to be trained on WIC vendor monitoring issues. At a minimum, the areas to be covered are vendor selection, statistical monitoring of data on redemption of food instruments by vendors, and effective identification of vendor fraud and abuse and appropriate penalties for such abuse. Also, there will be discussions on ADP system concerns as they relate to vendor management.

CURRENT STATUS:

A noncompetitive contractor has been selected.

EXPECTED CONTRACT: July 1987

CONTACTS:

FNS Nutrition and Technical Services Division
Karen Coffman, (703) 756-3888

Supplemental Food Programs Division
Debbie McIntosh, (703) 756-3710
Jackie Williams

CONTRACTOR: Miranda Associates, Inc.

19. WIC Vendor Management Study

MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES:

- o Identify and describe WIC vendor management practices in all 50 States and the District of Columbia;
- o Analyze relationships between different vendor management practices (e.g., selection, training, high risk vendor identification and compliance investigations) and critical program outcomes--detection of vendor fraud and overpayment, cost control and maintenance of participant access;
- o Develop recommendations for improving vendor management, with particular emphasis upon vendor selection;
- o Review vendor management policies and practices in related Federal programs; and,
- o Develop indicators of effective vendor management.

STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH:

This project is a research and development activity involving identification and analysis of current state practices and development of models for improving various facets of vendor management.

- o The study includes:
 - a 50 State survey to identify policies and State/local organizational patterns; and
 - 8-10 case studies focusing on program results attributable to different management practices.

CURRENT STATUS:

A national mail and telephone interviewing survey of State WIC officials is being prepared.

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE: September 1988

STUDY CONTACTS:

FNS Office of Analysis and Evaluation
Jerry Burns, (703) 756-3115

Supplemental Food Programs Division
Nancy Lyons, (703) 756-3730

CONTRACTOR: Professional Management Associates (PMA)

SUBCONTRACTOR: Applied Management Sciences

